

Golda Meir's Leadership in the Yom Kippur War

ABSTRACT

In the first half of the 1973 Yom Kippur War, Golda Meir and her colleagues demonstrated consistent leadership based on determination to provide the IDF with the necessary time, weapons and ammunition, and backing for operations to rescue Israel from the predicament in which it found itself during the first hours of the war, and to place it in a better position militarily in the negotiations expected after the war ended. She did not despair and give up even when it seemed that her efforts would come to nothing, when it seemed that the Security Council was about to declare a premature cease-fire, and when the American administration dragged its feet and refrained from sending arms shipments during the first week of the war. The policy of the Israeli political leadership largely achieved the goals at which it aimed – the IDF received the resources and the backing it needed, and succeeded in significantly changing the face of the campaign in Israel's favor.

INTRODUCTION

ON THE MORNING OF 6 OCTOBER 1973, AT 03:50 ON THE FAST DAY of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, Israel's prime minister, Golda Meir, was woken by the ringing of the telephone after sleep had eluded her for most of the night. The caller was her military secretary, Israel Lior, who told her of a message from Zvi Zamir, the head of the Mossad, who had gone to London to meet with a highly placed source (it is now known that this was Ashraf Marwan). Zamir reported that Egypt and Syria were about to launch a combined attack on Israel that evening.¹ A few hours later a telegram reached the Prime Minister's Bureau with the full report

sent by Zamir from London. It opened with the chilling sentence: "The Egyptian army and the Syrian army are about to launch an attack on Israel on Saturday 6.10.73 in the early evening." Highly detailed information followed about the war plans of the two armies.² This was the beginning of one of the most important dramas in Israel's history – the Yom Kippur War. At the height of the fighting, Prime Minister Meir declared "I say this with full awareness of its significance – we never faced so grave a danger in 1948"³ (the war for the establishment of the state). Up to this day the war remains a national trauma, which is almost unparalleled in Israeli history.

During the war, 6–25 October 1973, Israel succeeded in recovering from the severe blow it suffered during the first hours of the war, which at certain times seemed to endanger its existence. The war ended with IDF artillery shelling the outskirts of Damascus on the northern front, and Israel holding a large part of the west bank of the Suez Canal, encircling the Egyptian Third Army south of the Canal on the southern front. How did Israel recover so impressively? How much did Israel's political leadership contribute to this, and what was the role of Prime Minister Meir?

The article partly answers those questions by presenting the patterns of Golda Meir's leadership during the Yom Kippur War, and especially during the first and critical period of the war, which to a large extent determined its continuation.

CENTRAL ELEMENTS IN THE ISRAELI LEADERSHIP

Several different elements or centers of power can be distinguished in the decision-making bodies that directed Israel's policy during the war. The dominant figure was that of the prime minister herself, who was at the center of everything. No significant decision was taken without her playing a major role and without her approval.⁴ Golda Meir was assisted by the staff of her bureau.

The second center of power was the unofficial War Cabinet, which included Prime Minister Meir, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon, and Minister Israel Galili, assisted by various ministers and army commanders as needed. It dealt with the two main spheres of action: the military and the diplomatic ones, and the most important policy decisions of the war were taken there.

The third and largest body was the government plenum, which met nearly every day during the war. At these meetings reports were made on

the situation at the fronts and decisions taken on matters of principle that needed government approval. The government gave formal authority for the decisions of the war cabinet.

The fourth group of people involved in decision making consisted of Israel's representatives abroad, who were responsible for contacts with the US Administration and the UN during the war. They included Foreign Minister Abba Eban and the ambassador to the UN, Yosef Tekoah, but the most important role was that of ambassador Simcha Dinitz in Washington.

WHAT WERE THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WAR FOR GOLDA MEIR?

When war broke out it was clear that the first and natural goal was to win it, and in the case of Israel to ensure its existence. The question is what other objectives did Israel seek to achieve? In my judgment, throughout the war, Meir directed affairs with a view to the day after its conclusion and the political negotiations that would begin, she was sure, immediately after the war. Her main concern was therefore how Israel would be perceived after the war. Meir believed that the close relationship between Israel and the US was built on the US perception that Israel was strong and therefore support for it served American interests. The main question was whether Israel would be perceived as a weak state that suffered a defeat, or would still be the strongest state in the Middle East; and especially whether US policy makers would continue to view Israel as a strategic asset worth paying for in order to protect its interests. Or would it be seen as a "paper tiger" in Dayan's words,⁵ for it was not worthwhile endangering US interests, and the US would therefore support the Arabs' demand for an Israeli withdrawal to the 4 June 1967 lines. This demand had stood in the center of the political negotiations prior to the war, and Israel had fiercely rejected it. Thus, Meir was determined to end the war with a military achievement that would make it clear that Israel was still stronger than the Arab countries.⁶

I now discuss the discussion towards the end of the war on 19 October when Meir asked Deputy Chief of Staff Yisrael Tal "When will this end, Talik?" and added "Can we agree to a ceasefire when there are tens of thousands of Egyptians on our side?" (on the eastern side of the Suez Canal). Tal replied that the answer to the question depended on the definition of the goals of the war, which had previously been very clear – survival. Now that the wheel of fortune had turned in favor of Israel, they were no longer clear: "Now we want to survive in the future," replied Meir,⁷ meaning – that the

war aims were not only military, but also and perhaps primarily, political – to create a situation that would give Israel political achievements that would ensure its existence.

An expression of this can be seen even before the outbreak of fighting, when the prime minister was informed on 6 October by the head of the Mossad that war was about to erupt. She and Dayan decided not to respond to Chief of Staff David Elazar (Dado)'s proposal to launch a preemptive strike against the Egyptian and Syrian armies. Their decision against a preemptive strike was intended to win American support. They assumed that this would strengthen Israel's standing in the eyes of the US leadership during the military campaign and the political campaign at the UN, as well as in the diplomatic struggle expected after the war. At the government meeting on the afternoon of 6 October Meir said about the request to launch a preemptive strike: "I admit that my heart is very attracted to this, but I know in what world we live. Too bad, but it does not work." Dayan, and in fact all the ministers, shared her view that the world, which had tolerated the fact that Israel, a small and publicly threatened state, had launched a preemptive strike in June 1967, would not accept it when Israel enjoyed wide borders that were far from its population centers.⁸

As foreign minister, Golda Meir had headed the political struggle after the Sinai Campaign, which ended in a reluctant withdrawal by Israel.⁹ Meir understood the danger involved in starting the war without American consent. She was determined not to repeat it, and in fact, so was Prime Minister Levi Eshkol, who went to war in 1967 only after receiving hesitating consent from the US Administration.¹⁰

THE CRISIS OF 7 OCTOBER

For Golda Meir, these war goals did not change even during the difficult times at the beginning of the war – and even during the worst crisis that the Israeli leadership experienced during the morning and afternoon hours of 7 October. On the contrary, they strengthened her ambitions to end the war in the best possible situation. To that end, I will describe the events of that day first.

The 7th of October was one of the most dramatic days of the Yom Kippur War. It began on an optimistic note. At 01:30 a telegram was sent to the embassy in Washington and to Foreign Minister Eban in New York, from Deputy Prime Minister Allon, summing up the first day of fighting for US Secretary of State Kissinger. The text of the telegram radiated optimism regarding the IDF's ability to stop the Arab attacks.¹¹

However, during the next few hours it became clear that the optimistic reports were not supported by reality on the ground. During the night of 6/7 October and the following morning, the military situation worsened. The Egyptian army expanded the bridgeheads it had constructed and deployed additional forces across the Suez Canal. During the night, many of the outposts making up the Bar-Lev Line along the Canal were surrounded, and some were captured by the Egyptian army. The situation in the north was also desperate. In the center and the southern part of the Golan Heights, the main Syrian forces broke through the IDF's lines and penetrated deep into the Heights, faced only by sparse Israeli forces that were unable to stop them.

This was the most exhausting and difficult day of the war and perhaps one of the hardest in Meir's life. Throughout the day, the military situation continued to deteriorate and alarming reports were received. Syrian units reached a point a stone's throw away from the Jordan River bridges leading to Israel proper and the Galilee Panhandle.¹²

The crisis peaked at a meeting of the War Cabinet on 7 October at 14:50. This discussion was the lowest point for Israel's leadership throughout the war, and revealed the full extent of the deterioration in the military position. It focused on the report presented by Dayan, who had just returned deeply concerned from a tour of the fronts. His words produced an atmosphere of gloom and doom. He said that there was a real threat to the existence of the state: "They came with us to fight for the Land of Israel ... to conquer Israel, to finish off the Jews." Yigal Allon agreed with his analysis of the Arabs' goals. Meir said: "There is no reason for them not to continue, not only now. They've tasted blood ... This is the second round since 1948."¹³

Based on these words and the diary kept by one of the aides in the bureau of the prime minister, I conclude that in this atmosphere the prime minister allowed herself to a certain extent to be dragged into a mood of pessimism, and it was the only time throughout the war when she underwent a short personal crisis. The atmosphere that emerges from the exchange of words at the bureau was gloomy and was accompanied by a tone of despair and deep frustration at the Arabs' success in deceiving Israel and beating it.¹⁴ During these hours, Meir expressed, for the only time during the entire war, her remorse for not having allowed the chief of staff to launch a preemptive strike before the outbreak of firing. "If, heaven forbid, we are again in such a situation, we have to ignore the world and let the army start," she said.¹⁵

I do not believe that Golda Meir feared that Israel would be destroyed. She assumed that in the worst-case scenario, the Super Powers would

impose a cease-fire with the forces in place (a standstill), a possibility that arose in the discussion on 7 October.¹⁶ This meant a ceasefire with the Syrians in control of most of the Golan Heights and the Egyptians deployed along the eastern bank of the Suez Canal. In such a case, it would be a humiliating defeat that would probably lead to Israeli withdrawal to the 1967 borders. For Meir, it was almost as bad as a defeat in the war. While others, Dayan and Allon, talked about the grave situation in terms of the military situation, Meir spoke in political terms. She expressed great concern about the impact of the IDF's failure on Israel's status in the international arena and its presentation as weaker than had been assumed: "If we analyze the situation well, and in light of the lack of support for us, they'll come and tell us: 'Then you will move to a place where there are no wars'"¹⁷ It is hard to know what she meant by that term. Did she mean the countries of origin of the Jews, or the lines of 4 June 1967? This situation brought to her mind the primal fears of her childhood in Kiev when she heard about the pogroms against the Jews, and her deep suspicion of the Gentiles. After the consultation ended she added in her bureau: "We have little help in the world. Jews are not loved at all, weak Jews even less. We will be thrown to the dogs."¹⁸

The record of the government meeting on 11 October also shows that the prime minister and her ministers had dealt with existential anxieties during the first few days, and Meir defined her feelings during those hours as: "**horror**".¹⁹ The difficult reality was compounded by the realization that all this was happening on her watch, accompanied by a sense of personal failure. Nevertheless, if all these things affected her, besides her advanced age and poor health, the long exhausting days, and sleepless nights, there was no sign of it in her behavior or manner. "She was calm and pale, and only her body language hinted at the storm that was going on in her heart and the grave fears that accompanied her," wrote her son Menahem.²⁰

The rumors about her mental collapse on 7 October, and about words that Israel Galili apparently heard, that she would no longer see a reason for living and would consider suicide if the situation was indeed so grave,²¹ were rejected by Galili and others who were close to her during those hours.²² On the contrary, those who surrounded her during the war spared no praise for the leadership and strong spirit she displayed in those days, which were a crucial element in the ability of Israel's leadership to continue during those difficult times.²³

Golda Meir quickly recovered, and the question is where she drew the strength, both mental and physical, that helped her to overcome these feelings of horror, and to lead Israel with courage and determination for

26 exhausting days. In order to find her sources of strength, we note her words in 1978 on her 80th birthday, at the Labor Party conference held in her honor. Many of the speakers praised her leadership, especially in the Yom Kippur war and especially in its early days. Meir replied:

I did not despise those who despaired at certain times in those days [...] and it was not out of bravery that I did not join them. But from the same thing that brought me to Israel. [...] It was from the sense of having no choice, from a mystical belief that we must win.²⁴

Similarly, she said at a meeting of the War Cabinet on 10 October: “Every nation can win or not win. If, heaven forbid, we do not win - then we’re lost.”²⁵ Meir therefore drew her strength from the feeling that there was no choice, and from the realization that Israel must win, no matter what.

Meir and her colleagues believed that in order for the IDF to change things and bring Israel to the best military position at the end of the fighting, they must ensure three key elements: A. Time to reverse the battle in Israel’s favor; B. Equipment and ammunition to replace the extensive losses during the first days of fighting; and C. Backing for military operations that could change the face of the war in Israel’s favor, even if they involved great risks.

“THERE WILL BE NO CEASE-FIRE AS LONG AS THE
SITUATION DOES NOT RETURN TO NORMAL”

In order to provide the IDF with the time needed, the Israeli leadership tried to prevent at all costs a cease-fire resolution in the UN Security Council before the Arabs had been hit hard and as long as the Syrians held territory on the Golan Heights and the Egyptian Army was deployed along the entire eastern bank of the Suez Canal.

This effort was made with the help of Eban, who was in New York for the annual meeting of the UN General Assembly; “There will be no cease-fire as long as the situation does not return to normal. This should be the directive, and that should be said to Kissinger,” said Meir on 7 October in a consultation at her office.²⁶ In a telegram from Meir to Eban, before the UN Security Council session, she informed him of what appeared to be an improvement in the situation, and added that therefore “It is inconceivable to comply with the cease-fire resolution as long as the enemy’s armies were not repulsed and his attack was not broken.” She instructed him to “try

to delay and prolong the discussion and the decision”.²⁷ At the beginning of the fighting, Kissinger aspired to a rapid ceasefire to save détente,²⁸ but as the fighting intensified and the Soviets made it clear that they will not intervene, he leaned to the Israeli position. Indeed, the deliberations of the Security Council, which convened for the first time on the evening of 7 October, were proceeding slowly. During the next few days Israel continued its efforts with US assistance to postpone, as far as possible, the adoption of a cease-fire resolution.²⁹

On 10 October, the issue became even more urgent in view of news from the embassy in Washington of great pressure on President Nixon, mainly by the oil companies, to effect a ceasefire.³⁰ Dinitz also reported an approach by the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev to Nixon, to present a joint proposal for a ceasefire. Nixon was leaning towards agreement, due to the pressure and the growing fear of a confrontation between the US and the Soviets. Kissinger told Dinitz that the entire Administration – except for him – believed that the war was undermining what remained of the position of the US in the Middle East. He was making every effort to prevent a ceasefire initiative, or at least to postpone the reply to the Soviets, but it was doubtful that he would succeed.³¹ The secretary used a series of tricks that enabled the US to ostensibly respond to the Soviet proposal for a cease-fire, but in fact to postpone the decision for as long as possible.³²

This approach by Meir is notable in view of the different perception by Defense Minister Dayan. Dayan was naturally concerned with military matters and in the first days of the fighting was willing to pay a heavy political price to ensure the survival of Israel. Unlike his fellow ministers in the War Cabinet, in the consultation on 7 October Dayan expressed willingness to agree to a ceasefire “in place”,³³ a decision with far reaching political implications. On another occasion, Dayan said: “I will not commit suicide if they accept the call for a cease-fire without withdrawal.”³⁴

A common fallacy, also found in a television series about the Yom Kippur War shown on Israel's Channel 1 in 2013, is the claim that on 12 October, the Israeli leadership sought a ceasefire at any price, and even, in the words of the series editors, “raised the white flag”.³⁵ But this claim is completely unfounded. On that day, the War Cabinet did decide that Israel would tell the Americans that it was willing to accept the ceasefire proposal submitted by the British. But this move was prompted by tactical political considerations. That day Mossad Chief Zamir reported to the War Cabinet that the Egyptians were about to begin the second phase of

their attack across the Suez Canal towards the Gidi and Mitla passes, and therefore would not agree to the proposal for a ceasefire.³⁶ Israel's leaders decided that in light of the Arab refusal, Israel's willingness would give her an advantage and points with the American leadership.

Throughout the war the Israeli leadership was determined to make every effort to prevent a cease-fire at an inconvenient time. In the end, UN Security Council Resolution 338, which called for a cease-fire, was passed only on 22 October and its implementation was effectively delayed until 25 October after two more resolutions – 339 and 340.

“A QUESTION OF LIFE FOR US, SIMPLY S.O.S.” – THE EFFORT TO OBTAIN MILITARY SUPPLIES

The second component in Golda Meir's policy was tremendous pressure on the U.S. administration to provide aid in the form of massive military supplies. Meir stood at the center of those moves with considerable help from Ambassador Dinitz.

These efforts actually began even before opening fire. On 5 October, a cable was sent to Mordechai Shalev, the minister in Washington who was in charge of the embassy at the time (Dinitz was in Israel due to a family bereavement). The cable contained the prime minister's request to inform Kissinger about the unusual concentrations of forces on the borders. Kissinger was asked to convey a message through diplomatic channels to Egypt, Syria, and the Soviet Union that Israel had no intention of attacking its neighbors, but that if they dared to attack, it would respond with full force and determination. On the margins of the telegram, a note was added that if it turns out that the assessment of the possibility of opening fire is correct, then Israel would like to receive some items of military equipment immediately.³⁷

After the war began, Meir put obtaining military supplies from the Americans in a high place on her list of priorities. In a meeting with Deputy Defense Minister Tzvi Tzur on 7 October, the prime minister heard about the state of the fighting equipment: “If it ends within a week, we will not have a shortage, but then there will be problems.”³⁸ In light of the gloomy situation on the fronts, the prime minister understood that Israel might face a shortage of weapons and that immediate action must be taken, through the Embassy in Washington, to get a massive resupply from the Americans.³⁹ Dinitz acted in accordance with the directives of the leadership, but also initiated his own steps to influence the American

administration, such as pressure by figures sympathetic to Israel, including senators and congressmen, religious leaders, and other public figures.⁴⁰

In the contacts with the Americans, it was emphasized that Israel was fighting not only against the Arabs but also against the weapons with which the Soviet Union had armed them. But the American response did not bode well. Despite Israel's difficulties, the Americans estimated that the war would end with a crushing IDF victory even if it took longer than initially estimated.⁴¹ Therefore, Israel's desperate demands for arms, especially for forty combat planes, seemed to them exaggerated and unacceptable.⁴² From the beginning of the fighting, the Administration adopted a policy aimed at noninvolvement in the campaign that appeared to be contrary to local and global American interests.⁴³ They estimated that a massive resupply of weapons would be possible only after the fighting ended, and that for the time being they could supply a small quantity of items in the field of armaments and electronics.⁴⁴

On 8 October, an IDF counterattack on the southern front failed. This failure and heavy losses of men and equipment suffered by the 162nd Division, made it clear how urgent the supply of arms was. The war was going to be a long one, and the IDF put the equipment in its warehouses into the battle and remained essentially without significant reserves. Every weapon that was damaged was removed from the combat arsenal and no replacement was found. Dinitz reported that although Kissinger claimed to support arms supplies and Nixon had even approved in principle the replacement of planes that were damaged, the Department of Defense, including Secretary James Schlesinger, posed difficulties and claimed that planes and tanks will be provided only after the end of the battles.⁴⁵ At first, requests for weapons were delivered while trying to hide from Kissinger the grave situation of Israel, so that Israel would not be seen as weak, but now it was decided to present the full picture. The telegrams sent from the Prime Minister's Office to Washington described the IDF's heavy losses in combat equipment, which reached 49 planes and 500 tanks on the morning of 9 October and the urgent need to replace them.⁴⁶

At a meeting of the War Cabinet on the morning of 9 October, it became clear that the supply of weapons and ammunition from the US was likely to be the deciding factor between success and failure. Meir concluded that the efforts made so far in this regard did not match the harsh reality on the war front, and therefore the Americans did not understand how grave Israel's situation was. To the surprised audience, she suggested that she should go to Washington for 24 hours with a military man to meet with Nixon and convince him of the gravity of the situation and the need to provide arms to

Israel immediately. She stressed that she intended only aid in equipment, and would not ask for military intervention by American forces: "Vietnam has half a million soldiers – we don't want it!" she said. Meir offered to leave in complete secrecy, even without the knowledge of the rest of the government, in order to tell him "to give whatever he has – to see it as his own front." She assumed that the personal connections she had made with him on her visits to Washington would help her persuade him, in a heart-to-heart conversation, to respond to Israel's repeated requests for arms.⁴⁷

Meir did not go to see Nixon. On the same day, Kissinger told Dinitz that during his meeting with Nixon, he argued that there was no point in a Meir's coming, and agreed to approve the entire list of arms, ammunition, and electronic equipment. "All our losses in airplanes and tanks will be made up," Dinitz wrote.⁴⁸ Kissinger asked Israel to do everything in its power to strike the Arabs quickly and forcefully before a cease-fire was reached, and to do so regardless of the quantities of weapons and ammunition needed, since the Americans would provide them in full. In private, Kissinger said in a choked voice to the overwrought ambassador: "As long as I'm here, I will not let Israel be abandoned."⁴⁹

It took another four days of anger and frustration, and a harsh exchange of words between Dinitz, Kissinger, and Schlesinger,⁵⁰ who some have accused of being responsible for the delay,⁵¹ before the first American plane took off laden with supplies. Despite Kissinger's words he strongly opposed sending planes to Israel as long as the fighting continued.⁵² The US did not want to jeopardize their relations with the Arabs, and they found it difficult to meet Israel's immediate demand to ship weapons in such quantity.⁵³

According to David Tal, at the time Israel did not suffer from a shortage of weapons in the short term, but its requests were aimed at the longer range if the fighting continued and cost a heavy price.⁵⁴ On 12 October, however, the Prime Minister's Bureau was already in a state of crisis over arms supply, "almost despair" in Meir's words. The Bureau believed that elements in the Pentagon were deliberately trying to sabotage the process.⁵⁵ The chief of staff and the commander of the air force, Major General Benny Peled, claimed that without an immediate supply of dozens of planes within a few days, it would be very difficult for the air force to carry out its tasks. In the exchange of telegrams and telephone conversations with Dinitz, the prime minister continued to urge him to do everything in his power to speed up the supply of weapons, especially planes, which are "a question of life and death for us, simply S.O.S."⁵⁶ However, the Administration continued to question Israel's claims of a severe shortage of weapons, and continued its policy of promises on the one hand and "foot-dragging" on the other.⁵⁷

The long-awaited turnaround came on 13 October. It seems that at that stage the US reached the conclusion that a ceasefire would not be achieved soon and that, given the massive Soviet resupply of the Arabs; they could not stand idly by. Reports from the Tel-Aviv embassy confirmed Israel's claims about its army's grave situation in terms of weapons and ammunition.⁵⁸ According to Eban, US policymakers concluded that without an improvement in Israel's military situation, it would not be possible to reach a ceasefire, and certainly not negotiations.⁵⁹

US global interests therefore required it to strengthen Israel militarily in preparation for the continuation of the fighting. Kissinger's massive, sometimes even blunt, activity in supplying weapons, alongside Nixon's direct and decisive intervention, brought about the desired change. Schlesinger met with the military attaché, Mordechai [Motta] Gur, and informed him that the operation of the airlift would begin that day and that the supply of Phantoms would be accelerated.⁶⁰ On 13 October, at 16:00, Dinitz reported to Meir that the airlift was on its way. Giant planes would soon transfer all military equipment to Israel.⁶¹ The deep sighs of relief heard in the Prime Minister's Office probably reached Washington.

Even after the start of the airlift, Meir continued to pressure the Americans to continue and increase the delivery of military supplies. These efforts were made at all hours of the day and night, and as she told her ministers on 20 October: "Some American officials would like the war to end just so they can get a good night's sleep." One man in the White House [Scowcroft] woke up at 3:00, and again at 5:00 to deal with the transport of ammunition. "There comes a certain moment in which otherwise things do not work out."⁶²

On 15 October 18 Phantoms had already arrived, 14 American transport had planes landed and 18 more were on their way to Israel.⁶³ The massive supply continued at an accelerated pace until the end of the war and afterwards. Although Israel did not receive all the equipment it requested, it was a tremendous help, and made a great difference to the IDF.⁶⁴ At the same time massive Soviet supplies continued to the Arab countries.⁶⁵

"IF WE, HEAVEN FORBID, DO NOT WIN – THEN ALL IS LOST" – GOLDA MEIR AND THE IDF OPERATIONS

The third major component in Meir's policy during the Yom Kippur War was her willingness to allow the IDF to take any action, even involving great risk, which could change the face of the campaign and demonstrate Israel's strength.

However, in order to carry out this policy, Meir had to feel confidence in the army commanders and in the defense minister, and in their ability to carry out complicated military operations. Nevertheless, the military failures of the first days of the war cast doubt on the prime minister's confidence in them. The first cracks in this confidence appeared on 7 October when Meir heard the dismal report by Dayan on the Arabs' success. For years, the heads of the security establishment had given her to believe that in any situation and in any order of forces, they could hold back the Arabs and inflict a crushing defeat on them.⁶⁶ It is not surprising, then, that in the discussion on 7 October at 14:50, Meir defied Dayan: "I do not understand one thing: I thought they were being attacked and destroyed as soon as they crossed the canal. What happened?"⁶⁷

Another source of complaints against the army was the contradictory reports that Meir received during the first days of the war, that within a few hours turned what seemed to be impressive military successes into failures and defeats. In a nervous, tense discussion accompanied by an exchange of accusations among the ministers on the evening of 7 October she expressed her resentment over the contradictory reports she received from the defense establishment. She said: "Every hour and every half hour there is something. Once it is a disaster, and then maybe it is no longer a disaster."⁶⁸

The next morning the government met and received reports from the chief of staff on a big improvement in the situation at the fronts. He also reported on the success of the counterattack in Sinai that the IDF launched that morning.⁶⁹ Dado even said that if the appropriate conditions developed, the possibility of crossing the Suez Canal in several places on bridges built by the Egyptians could also be considered, and later reported that there might already be one IDF bridgehead across the Canal. Meir expressed great satisfaction "because they have to learn the lesson that for every such act they have to pay."⁷⁰ That evening it became apparent that again the army's reports were very inaccurate and the counterattack was in fact a crushing failure. It seems that at that point Meir really began to lose her patience at the conflicting reports.⁷¹

The criticism turned into great anger when Meir received reports of the "war of the generals" that was developing on the southern front due to the failures of the first days. It appeared that the division commanders were quarreling with each other, and that the head of Southern Command, Shmuel Gonen [Gorodish], had difficulty enforcing his authority over them, especially over the commander of the 143th division, Arik Sharon.⁷² Meir sought to rely on the veterans of the 1948 War. Yitzhak Rabin was sent to the fronts to report on the situation there. The head of the Mossad,

Zamir, practically became Meir's chief adviser on intelligence assessments during the war, in place of the head of Army Intelligence Eli Zeira.⁷³ When former chief of staff Haim Bar-Lev was sent by Dayan to command the southern front, in order to settle the uneasy relationship between the commanders there, Meir told him, "I am happy. It will be better for the heart if you will be there with all the 'geniuses' sitting there."⁷⁴

ATTACKS BEYOND THE CEASEFIRE LINES ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS AND THE SUEZ CANAL

The IDF slowly recovered from the failures of the early days and began to stabilize the situation on the fronts. On the morning of 10 October, IDF forces had succeeded in driving the Syrian forces almost completely back to the ceasefire line, and here and there even over it. By this stage the Syrian forces were no longer directly threatening Israel's territory. In the south the situation was static, with the IDF forces deployed, more or less, on a north to south axis at a distance of 4–12 kilometers from the Canal, exchanging intermittent fire with the Egyptians. For the leadership, the stage of extreme fluctuations between euphoria and fear for Israel's existence that characterized the first stage of the war was over. The atmosphere in the Prime Minister's Bureau had greatly improved.⁷⁵

The improved situation restored Meir's confidence in the IDF commanders, especially the chief of staff, and her belief that they could bring about a total change in the situation on the fronts. The discussions in the Prime Minister's Office changed direction – from defense and survival, to discussions of an attack and the transfer of the war to the Syrian and Egyptian territories. It was very clear that Meir was prepared to authorize the IDF to carry out dramatic offensive actions that involved taking risks.

The diplomatic moves after the war primarily dictated her considerations, as can be seen clearly in the War Cabinet consultation on 10 October. At this point it was felt that this was a decisive stage in the war, which demanded a strategic decision – whether to freeze the situation in the north and send a division down to the south, or to attack beyond the ceasefire line on the Golan Heights, into Syrian territory, as recommended by the chief of staff.

The task facing the leadership in this debate was to decide which strategy was preferable to prove Israel's strength and bring it closer to winning the war. While Dayan hesitated at first and Deputy Chief of Staff Tal opposed the move to attack Syria because it might drag Jordan and Iraq

into intervention, Meir supported the attack and made it clear that her considerations were political. She said:

Since the beginning of the campaign I have lived with the feeling that we cannot come out of this in a situation where the world will say: "That's it; whatever we thought about Israel and the IDF – that's it. ... Because any nation can win or lose, but if we, heaven forbid, do not win – then all is lost."

Thus, they must not end the war while the Americans think that because Israel is weaker than they thought, perhaps they have no need to quarrel with the Arabs on political issues, and to endanger US interests for the sake of Israel.⁷⁶ Her position was reinforced by the telegrams arriving from Dinitz, in which he repeated, in Kissinger's name, that Israel must make every effort to make haste and conquer territory over the ceasefire line, in preparation for the political struggle which would follow the ceasefire.⁷⁷ She approved the attack. The next day, the IDF launched an attack into Syrian territory, which on 13 October brought its front forces to a distance of a little over 30 kilometers from the Syrian capital Damascus, and its long-range artillery shelled the frontier of Damascus.

The most dramatic decision taken by Meir in the war was the decision on "Operation Valiant" – the crossing of the Suez Canal by IDF forces. From the first moment, Meir supported the idea that the IDF would cross the Canal at some point, despite the assessment of Dayan and the IDF command in the early stages of the war, that there was no chance of pushing the Egyptians back to the Canal line,⁷⁸ and despite the many risks involved. The prime minister refused categorically to end the war with the Egyptians deployed all along the eastern bank of the Canal and able to bring to the post-war negotiations an achievement that was actually a victory for them, which, in her assessment, would put them in a position of superiority over Israel.

For example, in a government meeting on 11 October Health Minister Victor Shem-Tov had suggested that Israel could agree to a cease-fire in the south, and actually accept the fact that the Egyptians remained along the eastern bank of the Canal, while Israel has no ground achievement. Shem-Tov claimed that in any case Israel had already declared that it could live without the Canal. He was referring to Israel's proposal before the war of an interim agreement in which it would withdraw some distance from the Canal.⁷⁹ Golda Meir reacted strongly to this proposal. This is a total defeat, she said. "It is not a cease-fire, it is surrender. There cannot be a greater

sin . . . than to accept an Arab victory, which would have far-reaching political implications.”⁸⁰

On 12 October, a decisive debate was held on military policy on the southern front, in which the entire military echelon, as well as the head of the Mossad and the members of the War Cabinet, participated. Elazar reported that the General Staff was hesitating whether to begin an attack in the south, with the aim of crossing the Canal in one place. He argued that in view of the exhausted condition of the fighting men and the air force, and without resupply of military equipment, the IDF was greatly in need of a ceasefire. If it was not achieved, a war of attrition might result under very difficult conditions, which would require the mobilization of high school students and Jews from the Diaspora, and similar steps. Therefore, the main consideration in the question of whether to attack the next day was whether this would increase or decrease the chances of a ceasefire.

Bar-Lev, the southern front commander, presented several courses of action. He presented the advantages and the dangers of crossing the Canal while two Egyptian divisions with some 500 tanks were stationed west of it, including the fear that if the only bridgehead was hit, the force that crossed the bridge would be cut off. However, he emphasized his belief that “the advantages justify the risks”. While the discussion was taking place in a grim atmosphere, Zamir received a report that the Egyptians were about to begin the second phase of their attack on the passes. Elazar said: “I hope they do attack. We’ve been waiting for that for several days.” It was therefore decided to postpone the Israeli attack, based on the hope that the IDF would halt the Egyptian attack and destroy hundreds of tanks, and change the balance of forces in the south.⁸¹

In fact, it is not clear what Meir’s position was in this consultation, since she did not give an opinion. Despite her strong desire to change the situation in the south, she seemed very concerned about the tremendous risks inherent in such an attack and the many losses that were expected. She seemed to be relieved when Zamir brought the dramatic news that made it possible to postpone the decision and said, “I understand that Tsvika [Zamir] finished our discussion.”⁸²

On 14 October, the Egyptians began the second stage of their assault, and armored divisions attacked the IDF forces in an attempt to reach the Mitla and Gidi passes about 30 kilometers from the Suez Canal. This time the IDF was well prepared and its armored forces blocked the Egyptians and caused heavy casualties. The military leadership saw the failure of the Egyptian attack and its consequences as a change in the strategic situation on the front. On the evening of 14 October, the government was asked to

decide whether to approve the proposal of the defense minister and the chief of staff to launch an attack, during which the IDF would cross the Canal in one place and erect a bridgehead on the other side.

In the decisive discussion, the ministers – after their previous bitter experience – hesitated to approve the plan. An acrimonious argument ensued, which was one of the most emotional during the entire war. Some felt that the severe shock of the first three days of the war, and the complete breakdown of all the theories presented to them in recent years by the top level of the IDF and the security services had profoundly influenced their thinking. Others said that despite the risks of the proposed plan, they put their trust in the military commanders who had weighed all the elements, and they should be allowed to act according to it. Dayan emphasized the need for a decisive battle with the Egyptians, despite all the apprehensions, in order to expedite the end of the war. He rejected the possibility of the force that crossed the Canal being cut off from the rest of the army.⁸³

The prime minister faithfully expressed the many hesitations and fears that accompanied the government: “I have nightmares because of all that may happen,” she said. She added that this was not a choice between a good option and a bad one; but rather a choice between two difficult and dangerous courses of action, of which the least difficult must be chosen. Nevertheless, she put all her weight in favor of the security echelon’s recommendation. She added that she had full confidence in the General Staff, and if the IDF Command recommended this step it should be approved. After a long discussion, the government gave its approval of the plan as proposed by Dayan and Elazar.⁸⁴

The following day, the IDF launched “Operation Valiant”, which began with many difficulties and failures, but ended with the conquest of extensive areas west of the Suez Canal. The IDF reached the 101st kilometer on the Suez-Cairo road and most importantly, surrounded the Egyptian Third Army.

GOLDA MEIR AND IDF CASUALTIES

Meir’s aggressive policy naturally raises the question to what extent she considered the heavy losses caused to the IDF in the operations which she approved. Throughout her years as prime minister, the issue of casualties in shooting exchanges and terror attacks was one of the most sensitive and difficult that Meir had to deal with.⁸⁵ However, her policy during the war

to bring Israel to a military achievement at any price is also reflected in her attitude toward the sensitive issue of IDF casualties in combat. Surprisingly, Meir was the only member of the War Cabinet who did not, to my knowledge, express unequivocally the need to prevent casualties in the planning of battles. She certainly did not ignore the issue. She expressed a great deal of pain over the casualties and the falling of sons of acquaintances.⁸⁶ In the government meeting she said that her face during the televised speech to the nation on 10 October was sad because of the painful price, and that “every loss is a terrible price”. But I did not encounter a statement by her, such as those of Allon, Galili, and specially Dayan, who repeated the need to plan the operations so as to cause as few losses as possible.⁸⁷

Here again it was the feeling that the war must be won at all costs that led her to adopt the position that if there is no choice, you have to pay the price. For example, at the government meeting on 21 October, some ministers, including Allon, expressed criticism of the heavy losses during “Operation Valiant” and claimed that some of them were unnecessary and occurred in operations that could have been avoided. The prime minister mentioned the great pain caused by the fall of soldiers because “we are a small nation and everyone knows everyone else.” But she dismissed these claims and said:

Two drastic decisions were made in the government during these two weeks (despite the forecast of heavy casualties): A. When it was decided to concentrate in Syria, and it was not simple, because we asked what would be down there [in Sinai]; B. When we decided to cross the Canal. You cannot and should not make a calculation which action resulted in a greater number of casualties. When there is shooting, there will always be casualties and it cannot be otherwise. But I think the two major operations we approved eventually saved casualties, and put us in a position that we are at least equal to the Arabs [and she meant from the political point of view].⁸⁸

Such a statement by Meir, the soft hearted Jewish grandmother, can lead people to perceive her as insensitive and lacking human consideration; but on the other hand, it can be viewed as showing the kind of difficult and heartbreaking decisions that a leader must make when he or she heads a state at war, struggling to survive. I think it symbolizes the determined and unflinching leadership shown by Meir during the Yom Kippur War – leadership that was a key component in the fact that Israel started the war on the verge of defeat, and finished it with decisive military achievements.

EPILOGUE

The war ended with a sense of great satisfaction in the Prime Minister's Office. The leadership felt that they had succeeded in bringing Israel from a low point to the point where Egyptian leader Anwar Sadat was appealing to the Americans to save the besieged Third Army. His cries were music in Golda Meir's ears. This was her aim from the beginning of the war – for Israel to hold Egypt by the throat and to hold a crucial bargaining chip for future negotiations. When Kissinger began negotiations after the war, Israel was in a strong position. At the same time, it must be noted that the war did not end with a clear Israeli victory, and the Egyptians also had many achievements. This is why the two countries demonstrated willingness for flexibility and compromise during the negotiations that led to the signing of the disengagement agreement between Israel and Egypt in January 1974, and a similar agreement with Syria in May of that year. This was also the beginning of the road that led to the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979.

NOTES

I would like to thank Dr. Louise Fischer for her important help. The following end notes 7, 14, 18, 19, 26, 34, 36, 39, 47, 55, 59, 69, 70, 74, 75, 80, 81, 82, 83, 86, 87 are based on documents in files used as a source for my book *Golda Meir: The Fourth Prime Minister – Selected Documents* (Jerusalem, 2016) [Hebrew]. The documents were published or cited with special permission from the Prime Minister's Office; the files remain classified.

1. Eitan Haber, *Today War Will Break Out* (Tel-Aviv, 1988), 12–3 [Hebrew].
2. Shimon Golan, *War on Yom Kippur* (Ben Shemen, 2013), 249 [Hebrew].
3. Hagai Tsoref, ed., Arnon Lammfromm (series editor), *Golda Meir: The Fourth Prime Minister – Selected Documents* (Jerusalem, 2016), 533 [Hebrew].
4. The analysis of the decision-making bodies during the war is based on Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, chapters 18–19, 505–82.
5. ISA, Discussion in the War Cabinet, 7 October, 37 Years since the Outbreak of the Yom Kippur War <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#!/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684diad5b>
6. Meir said this even before the fighting broke out. See her conversation with US Ambassador Keating on 6 October at 10:10. Keating to Secretary of State, 10:33, Richard Nixon Presidential Library (RNL), file: 610/06.
7. ISA, A-7487/2, Diary of the PM's bureau, 19 October; Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 551.

8. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, doc. 143, 515; Discussion at the Defense Minister's Bureau, 6 October, 05:50, Golan, *War*, 254–6; ISA, A-4996/3, LV/982, Ambassador to Washington Simcha Dinitz' telegram on his conversation with Kissinger, in which he said that Israel had not launched a preemptive strike because of political considerations, 7 October.

9. Nana Sagi, ed., *Documents on The Foreign Policy of Israel*, vol. 12 Israel State Archives (Jerusalem, 2009) [Hebrew].

10. Michael Oren, *Six Days of War – The Campaign that Changed the Middle East* (Tel-Aviv, 2004), 169–98; Arnon Lammfromm, *Levi Eshkol, A Political Biography, 1969–1944* (Tel-Aviv, 2014), 485 [both in Hebrew].

11. ISA, A-7250/4, VL/769, Mordechai Gazit to Mordechai Shalev, 01:30; Israel Galili to Abba Eban, 7 October.

12. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 519, briefing at the command post, 7 October, 07:30; doc. 146, ISA, A-7017/1, Israel Lior's report to Meir: "The situation in the north is grave ... now everything depends on the air force."

13. ISA, 37 Years ... , Discussion at the War Cabinet, 7 October, 14:50, <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684diad5b>

14. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 523. Doc. 146, ISA, A-4787/5, Diary of Prime Minister's Office (PMO), 7 October.

15. *Ibid.*, 520, Discussion of the War Cabinet, 9:10 AM, ISA, A-7017/1.

16. ISA, 37 Years ... Discussion at the War Cabinet, 7 October, 14:50, <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684diad5b>

17. *Ibid.*

18. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 523, Diary of PMO, 7 October.

19. *Ibid.*, 535, A-7052/9, Government meeting, 11 October.

20. Menachem Meir, *My Mother Golda Meir* (New York, 1983), 220.

21. Hanoach Bartov, *Dado, 48 Years and Another 20 Days*, vol. 2 (Or Yehuda, 2002), 423 [Hebrew]; Bartov claims that he heard this from Israel Galili.

22. Conversation with Israel Galili, Y. Ben-Porat, *Conversations* (Tel-Aviv, 1981), 125; A conversation with Jacob Shimshon Shapira, *ibid.*, 220; Moshe Dayan, *Milestones* (Jerusalem, 1976), 609; Zvi Zamir and Efrat Mass, *With Open Eyes* (Or Yehuda, 2011), 161; Author's interview with Zvi Zamir, 15 January 2014; Davis Institute interview with Yigal Allon, ISA, A-5001/22 [all in Hebrew]; US ambassador note on rumors about Meir's mental state: Keating to Secretary of State, 16 October, 09:41, RNL, file: 610/07.

23. Miron Medzini, *Golda Meir – Political Biography* (Tel-Aviv, 2008), 561 [Hebrew].

24. Meir's remarks at Mapai Center meeting, 21 May 1978, Labor Party Archives, A-3.

25. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, doc. 153, 539.

26. *Ibid.*, 527; Diary of Prime Minister's Bureau, 6 October 21:45, ISA, A-7487/18.

27. ISA, A-7048/14, Mordechai Gazit to Mordechai Shalev at the Embassy in Washington, and Foreign Minister Abba Eban in New York, 7 October.

28. Craig Daigle, *The Limits of Détente, the United States, the Soviet Union, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1969–1973* (New Haven and London, 2012), 298–302.

29. ISA, A-7250/5, Dinitz to Gazit, 9 October 1973, 3:30 am; Eban to Kidron and the Prime Minister, 3:30 am; Yosef Tekoah to Kidron and Gazit, at 6:00; Dinitz to Gazit, 9 October, 20:30; Abba Eban, *My Life Chapters* (Tel-Aviv, 1978), 503–5 [Hebrew].

30. ISA, A-4996/3, LV/26, Dinitz to Gazit, 10 October.

31. *Ibid.*, LV/26, 29, 33, 43, Cables from Dinitz and Shalev to Gazit, 10 October.

32. *Ibid.*, A-7250/5, Gazit to Dinitz telegrams, 11 October.

33. See Note 16.

34. ISA, A-7487/1, Diary of PMO, 9 October.

35. Israel Television, Channel One, “40 Years of the Yom Kippur War”, Episode Two, October 2013.

36. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 536, Military-Political Consultation, 12 October, 14:30, ISA, A-7250/6.

37. *Ibid.*, A-7048/14, Gazit to Shalev, 5 October.

38. Discussion at Prime Minister’s Bureau, 7 October, 13:40, ISA: <http://www.archives.gov.il/chapter/%D7%9E%D7%9C%D7%97%D7%9E%D7%AA-%D7%99%D7%95%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D7%99%D7%A4%D7%95%D7%A8-7-%D7%91%D7%90%D7%95%D7%A7%D7%98%D7%95%D7%91%D7%A8-1973/>

39. ISA, A-7487/1, Diary of PMO, 8 October, 09:00.

40. *Ibid.*, A-7250/5, Dinitz to Kidron and Gazit, 9 October, 14:00; Simcha Dinitz, “The Yom Kippur War: Diplomacy of War and Peace,” *Israel Affairs* 6.1 (1999): 113; Kissinger’s conversation with Senator Frank Church, Henry Kissinger, *Crisis: Managing Foreign Policy in the Yom Kippur War and Exit from Vietnam* (Jerusalem, 2005), 125–6 [Hebrew].

41. David Tal, “Tested Alliance – The American Airlift to Israel in the 1973 October War,” *Israel Studies* 19.3 (2014): 32; Ambassador Keating to Secretary of State, 8 October RNL, NSC Files 610/06.

42. Kissinger’s conversation with Nixon, 8 October, 19:08, Kissinger, *Crisis*, 115–7; *Years of Upheaval* (Boston & Toronto, 1982), 468–91. See also report on Zeev Laqueur’s talk with James Schlesinger, 24.7.1974, ISA, HZ-6858/2; Daigle, *The Limits*, 304–5.

43. Tal, Tested Alliance”, 32; Daigle, *The Limits*, 303.

44. Kissinger, *Crisis*, 68–92.

45. ISA, A-7047/10, A-4996/3, Exchanges of telegrams between Dinitz and Shalev and Gazit, 8 October, 14:30, 18:15, 21:30, 22:00.

46. *Ibid.*, Gazit to Dinitz, LV/797, Gazit to Dinitz, VL/801, Gazit to Dinitz, LV/808; Keating to Secretary of State, 9 October, 19:15, RNL, file: 610/07.

47. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 530, Source: ISA, A-7050/7.

48. ISA, A-4996/3, LV/15, Shalev to Gazit, 9 October.
49. *Ibid.*, LV/18, Dinitz to Gazit, 9 October.
50. ISA, A-4996/3, LV/89, Shalev to Gazit on meeting of Dinitz-Schlesinger; Dinitz to Gazit on meeting with Kissinger, LV/87; LV/100, Shalev to Gazit on meeting of Eban, Dinitz and Shalev with Kissinger, 13 October.
51. Tal, "Tested Alliance," 29; Daigle, *The Limits*, 305.
52. Tal, "Tested Alliance," 39.
53. *Ibid.*
54. *Ibid.*, 47.
55. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 541, ISA, A-7115/3, Meir's remarks at Government meeting, 14 October, 10:00.
56. *Ibid.*, A-7050/17, VL/ 852, Gazit to Dinitz; A-4888/4, Consultations at the Prime Minister's Bureau, 12 October.
57. A-4996/4, LV/77, Dinitz to Gazit, 12 October; Tal, "Tested Alliance," 47.
58. Keating to secretary of state, 13 October, 20:10, RNL, NSC Files: 610/07. Memorandum for: General Scowcroft, from: Bud Mc Farlane, Subject: Supply and Contingency Planning, 14 October; 610/04; Daigle, *The Limits*, 306–9.
59. ISA, A-7115/3, Abba Eban's remarks at cabinet meeting, 20 October.
60. A-7050/1, Motta Gur to Mordechai Gazit, 13 October, 04:00. At that point from the documents it seems that Kissinger had a large share in it. According to Tal, Kissinger actually continued to oppose the supply of military equipment to Israel and Schlesinger and the Pentagon staff were the ones who worked energetically for it, "Tested Alliance," 48.
61. ISA, A-4996/4, LV/101, Dinitz to Gazit, 13 October.
62. *Ibid.*, A-7115/3, Meir's remarks at the Cabinet meeting, 20 October. See also Memorandum to Secretary Kissinger, from Donald Stukel, Subject: Financing Arms for Israel, RNL, NSC Files: 610/04.
63. ISA, A-4996/4, LV/121, Dinitz to Gazit, 15 October. At that time, 41 American Air Force personnel were permanently stationed at the Lod airport, including an aircraft mechanic, communications experts, and technicians. They were instructed to keep their presence as low key as possible.
64. Keating to secretary of state, 18 October, 19:28, RNL, NSC Files, 610/06.
65. ISA, A-4996/4, VL/930, Gazit to Dinitz, 16 October. As of 16 October, 287 transport aircraft, most from the Soviet Union and some from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria, had landed in Egypt and Syria, and a considerable number of cargo ships had arrived too.
66. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, Doc. 110, 401. In a conversation between Meir and Dayan on 29 November 1971, Dayan said that he was not afraid of war, and if it was forced on Israel, there would be "slaughter of Egypt", as he put it.
67. ISA, Discussion at the Prime Minister's Bureau, 7 October, 14:50, 37 Years ... <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684d1ad5b>
68. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 522.

69. *Ibid.*, 526, chief of staff's remarks at Cabinet meeting, 8 October, 10:00, ISA, A-7052/8.

70. Prime minister's remarks at Cabinet meeting, 8 October, 10:00, *Ibid.*

71. Discussion at Prime Minister's Bureau, 8 October ISA, <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684diad5d> Meir said: "Only in the morning it was necessary to 'restrain' Arik" [Sharon, the commander of the 143th division].

72. Arye Braon, *Moshe Dayan in the Yom Kippur War* (Tel-Aviv, 1993), 137–40 [Hebrew].

73. Hagai Tsoref, "The 27 Days that Changed the Status of the Mossad and its Head," *Mabtmalam* 74 (2016): 20–4 [Hebrew].

74. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 528; Source: Diary of PMO, 9 October, ISA, A-7487/1.

75. *Ibid.*, 533. See her speech at the government meeting 10 October, "The war unfortunately is not over, but there is almost a revolutionary difference compared to what it was days ago. The change is real," ISA, A-7052/9.

76. *Ibid.*, doc. 152. Political-Security Consultation, 10 October, ISA, A-7250/6.

77. A-4996/3, LV/26, Dinitz to Gazit, 10 October.

78. ISA, 37 Years ..., Discussion at the Prime Minister's Bureau, 9 October, 7:30. <http://www.archives.gov.il/archives/#/Archive/obo717068001c167/File/obo7170684ce409f/Item/0907170684diad5e>

79. Regarding Israel's proposal for an interim agreement, see Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 488, 492–3; Meir Boimfeld, *A Jump into Cold Water, The Political Contacts between Israel, Egypt and the United States in the Years Prior to the Yom Kippur War, 1970–1973* (Modiin-Reut, 2017).

80. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 534–5, Government meeting, 11. October, ISA, A-7052/9.

81. Bartov, *Dado*, 543–50; Golan, *War*, 585–97; Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 536, Military and Political Consultation, 12 October, 14:30 ISA, A-7250/6.

82. *Ibid.*

83. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 547, Government meeting, 14 October, ISA, A-7115/3.

84. *Ibid.*

85. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 337, doc. 95; 324, doc. 92; 286 etc. Medzini, *Golda*, 420–46.

86. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 550, ISA, A-7487/2.

87. *Ibid.*, 550, on 19 October Dayan said that the next steps should be planned so that they would cost as few casualties as possible.

88. Tsoref, *Golda Meir*, 569, doc. 158.

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